

Senator Ron Wyden Urges Americans to Use “Chutzpah” to Defend Democracy

By Hannah Portman

Sen. Ron Wyden, the Democrat senior U.S. senator for Oregon, known for being an advocate of civil rights, called

on the American people to mobilize and use “chutzpah” to restore the core systems of America’s Democracy, in a conversation today with Jim Acosta, former CNN anchor and chief White House correspondent.

“Our systems of checks and balances, what the Founding Fathers had in mind, has never been under assault as it is today,” Wyden said.

Wyden and Acosta sat down at the Edward Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate to talk about Wyden’s new book, “It Takes Chutzpah,” and how in his view, the American people must come together to make progressive change.

In a room that replicates the United States Senate chamber in Washington, D.C., Wyden called out President Trump and others for being bullies, effectively dismantling checks and balances, and told the crowd of about 100 people to stand up for their beliefs and make change.

Wyden said we must use our chutzpah, a Yiddish word used to describe extreme confidence and audacity, to create a movement he called a “mobilization for the truth.”

“Chutzpah is really the best of the United States,” he said. We’ve got to get the word out about what’s really going on, so that people will say, ‘Hey, we want a government that checks, that keeps the balances,’” Wyden said. “We have to [mobilize] now.”

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He said that President Trump is not doing what he was elected to do, especially in terms of healthcare and privacy. The only way to draw attention to this “abusive” behavior and hold leaders accountable is to come together.

“We’re going to win this in the communities, in the hearings, in the opportunities we’ll have in the media to make the case of how skewed these prior priorities are,” Wyden said.

Diane Rosen, a resident of Pocasset, Massachusetts, said she thought Wyden’s discussion was excellent, but is looking for the next steps to ensure that changes get made.

“I would love to have a to do list, a personal to do list, because if I don’t do something and things go south, then I’m partially responsible,” Rosen said.

In general, Wyden told the crowd to be aggressive, gusty, and gritty. “We want people to just stick their neck out,” he said.

Wyden emphasized the importance of going to town hall meetings, coordinating with officials and other people who share their interests, and engaging in community outreach to make the changes necessary to uphold the standards of American democracy.

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